for implementing various promotional activities, which include, skill upgradation, design & technology upgradation, exhibitions, craft bazars, printing of catalogue, folders and setting up of common facility center. This has resulted in benefiting 760 handicraft artisans.

For preserving and promoting the textile handloom sector in the country include in the State of Assam, the schemes include Integrated Handlooms Development Scheme, Marketing & Export Promotion Scheme, Mill Gate Price Scheme, Handloom Weavers Comprehensive Welfare Scheme and Diversified Handloom Development Scheme for the welfare of handloom weavers. These schemes/programmes facilitate in enhancing the production, productivity and efficiency of the handloom sector and enhance the income and socio-economic status of the weavers by upgrading their skills and providing infrastructural input and marketing support. During the year 2007, a sum of Rs. 9.28 crore has been released so far to Government of Assam under various schemes.

(c) Does not arise.

Package for textile/handicraft exporting community

766. SHRI B.J. PANDA:
MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR:

Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to provide an appropriate package for the textile/handicraft exporting community to check appreciating rupee with a view to compensate them;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also proposed to provide special fiscal benefits to the above sector at par wtih agriculture sector; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) and (b) The Government is seized of the submissions of textiles export promotion councils and other associations, which attribute the decline in India's textile exports to the recent appreciation in the value of the Indian rupee vis-a-vis the US dollar. The Government has introduced certain measures to provide relief to the affected textiles and handicrafts exporters, which include an increase in Duty Entitlement Pass Book and Duty Drawback rates, exemption from service tax on select services, reduction in interest rates of pre-shipment and post-shipment credit and faster clearance of arrears of terminal excise duties and Central Sales Tax.

(c) and (d) There is no such proposal under consideration of the Government.

Seal of excellence by UNESCO to traditional handicraft products

767. MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR:
SHRI B.J. PANDA:

Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that UNESCO has awarded the Seal of Excellence to traditional handicraft products including 12 from India;

(b) if so, the details of the Indian awardees; and

(c) how far will this help and encourage the Indian Craftmasters both in the national and international markets?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) Yes, Sir. 12 handicrafts products from India were awarded by the UNESCO Seal of excellence in Islamabad, Pakistan in 2007.

(b) The names and crafts of the Indian Awardees are attached as Statement *(See* below).

(c) The conferring of Seal of Excellence will encourage the India craft persons in the national and international marketing in the following ways:

i. Each product recognized with the UNESCO SEAL is given a certified. The Seal certificate can be used as a promotional tool to attest the quality and authenticity of a product.

ii. Producers have the opportunity to display and sell the Seal certified product at the annual exhibition and trade fair organized for Seal products and will receive guidance about participating in international trade fairs.

iii. Producers benefit from the promotion and communication campaign coordinated by UNESCO and its partners.

iv. All SEAL—certified products together with producer's information data are listed on the UNESCO Bangkok website so that interested buyers can directly communicate with producers and place orders.

v. UNESCO assist national and sub-regional partners in organizing workshops on design, marketing and support mechanism for the producers of Seal-certified products.

vi. Producers of Seal—certified handicrafts are provided with an advice and support from UNESCO to register their products under intellectual property rights regimes.

Statement

The names and crafts of the Indian awardees awarded by UNESCO

Sl. No.	Name of Artisan	Name of Craft
1.	Shri Sankar Kumar Meher	Scarf
2.	Shri Chaturbhuj Meher	Purna, Brikshya, Wall Hanging
3.	Shri AVANI	Silk Stole & Muffler Naturally Dye
4.	Shri Abdul Jabbar M. Khatri	Chandrokhani Shawl
5.	Shri Surendra Meher	Silk Odhini Scarf
6.	Shri Bindoo Ranjan	Algaed Khadi
7.	Shri Muhammad Yousaf	Block Printed Bamboo Mat
8.	Shri Yasin Savaijiwala	Hand Block Printed Stole
9.	Shri Arshad Kafee	Lamp Wood Inlay
10.	Shri Ayush Kasliwal	Brass Pods, Teelight holder vase snack server
11.	Shri Pankaj Soni	Thewa Box Jewellery Box
12.	Shri Muhammad Maqbool Jan	Jewellery Box